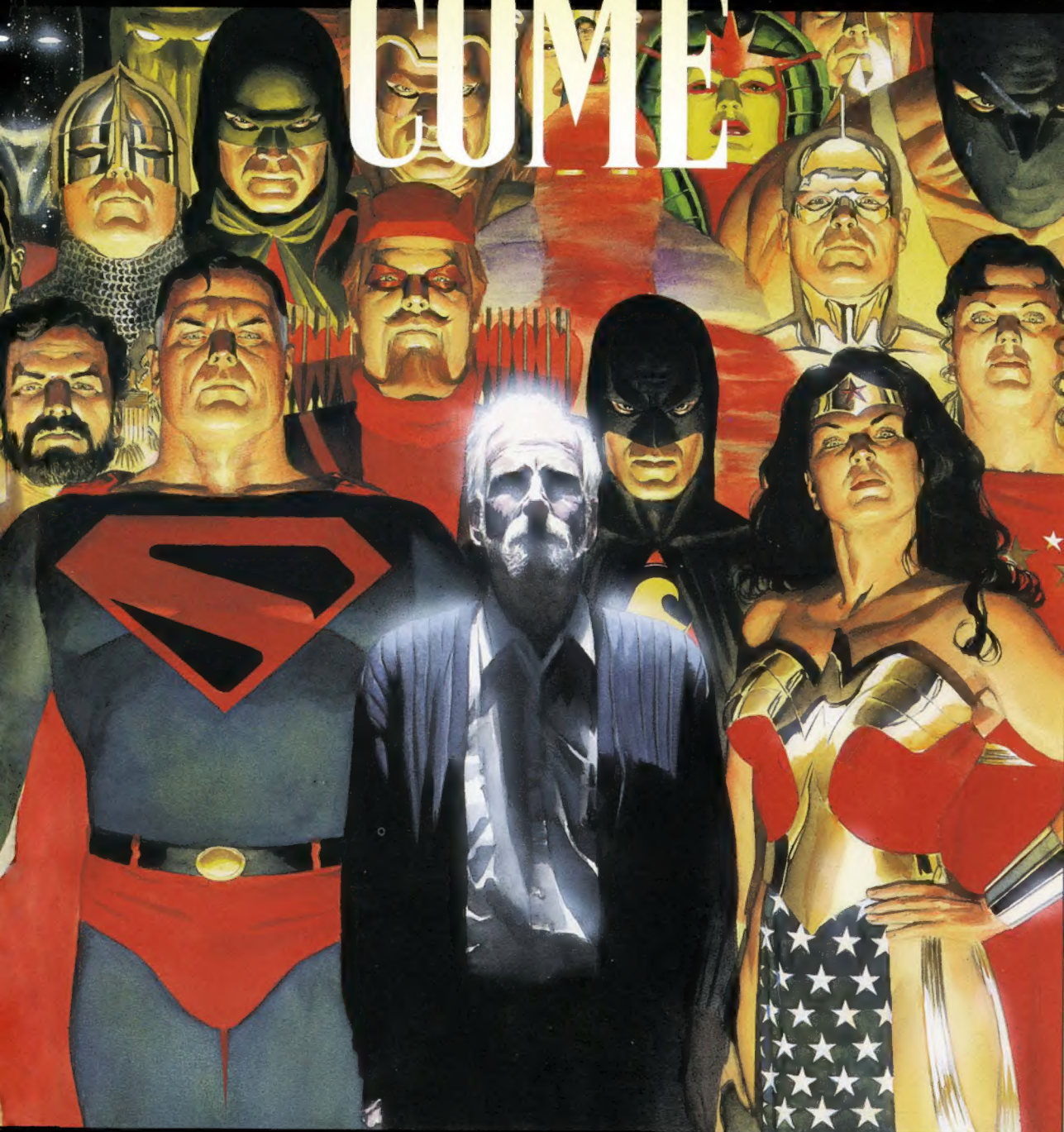




KINGDOM COME™



Mark WAID

Alex ROSS



KINGDOM COME
BOOK TWO

KINGDOM COME™



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DC COMICS

Mark WAID Alex ROSS



And I saw the seven
angels which stood
before God...

“... and another angel
came and stood at the
altar, having a golden
censer...”

“... and the angel took
the censer, and filled it
with fire of the altar...”

“... and the seven angels
prepared themselves to
sound...”



"...to sound..."



...angels...

...no... I'm
with the
angel...

...aren't I...?



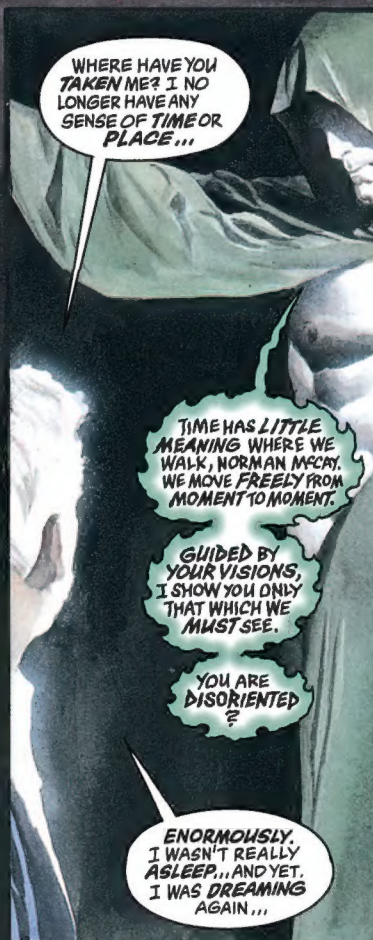
WHERE HAVE YOU
TAKEN ME? I NO
LONGER HAVE ANY
SENSE OF TIME OR
PLACE...

TIME HAS LITTLE
MEANING WHERE WE
WALK, NORMAN MCCRY.
WE MOVE FREELY FROM
MOMENT TO MOMENT.

GUIDED BY
YOUR VISIONS,
I SHOW YOU ONLY
THAT WHICH WE
MUST SEE.

YOU ARE
DISORIENTED
?

ENORMOUSLY.
I WASN'T REALLY
ASLEEP... AND YET,
I WAS DREAMING
AGAIN...



WERE
YOU...?





THIS

IS

MY

COUNTRY!

FOR YEARS,
THE AMERICOMMANDO
AND HIS MINUTEMEN
HAVE PROTECTED THE
U.S. FROM FOREIGN
THREATS...

...ONLY TO HAVE
OVERLOOKED THE MOST
INSIDIOUS MENACE OF
ALL!

THE POOR, TIRED,
HUDDLED MASSES CAMPING
ON OUR SHORES, BEGGING
CITIZENSHIP!

YOU
IMMIGRANTS DARE
EXPECT SANCTUARY?
AMERICA'S NOT AS BIG
AS IT USED TO BE!
FOR GOD'S SAKE--
KANSAS IS GONE!

WE CAN'T
HOUSE YOU NOW!
WE CAN'T EVEN FEED
YOU NOW! BUT STILL
YOU FORCE YOUR-
SELVES ON US!

WELL, NO
MORE!

TODAY, THE
AMERICOMMANDO
DECLARES WAR ON
THE WRETCHED
REFUSE!

AT THE COMMAND
OF THE BRAINTRUST-
MY MINUTEMEN WILL
CLEANSE AMERICA'S
SHORES!



WE WILL
DEFEND THIS NATION
AGAINST--

?

PAF

PAF

DEFEND YOURSELF,
AMERICOMMANDO! THIS LAND
IS OURS TO GUARD!

AMERICA.
LOVE IT--

--OR
LEAVE
IT.

GOOD GOD...THE
BYSTANDERS...

THESE AREN'T
HEROES! THEY'RE
MADMEN!

THEY'RE READY TO
BATTLE OVER TERRITORY--
WITHOUT BOTHERING TO CARE
WHO'S CAUGHT BETWEEN
THEM!

SOMEONE
SHOULD DO
SOMETHING!



INDEED.



Angels.

No. Not
angels.

Gods
themselves.



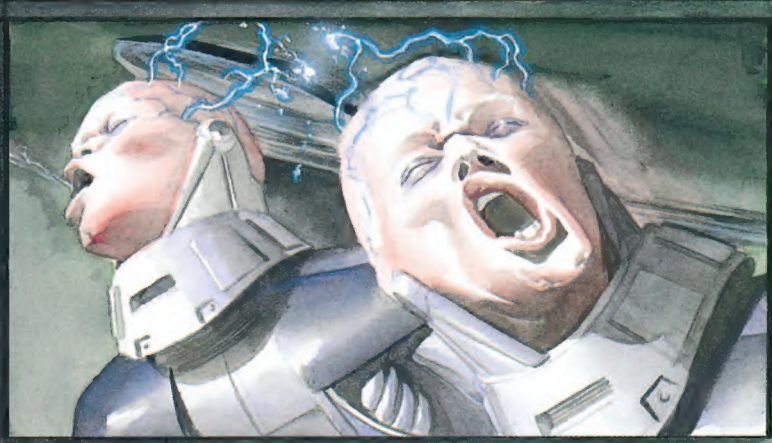
Superman had returned...
in doing so, drawing from
seclusion the titans of
yesteryear...

...their emerald flashes and
scarlet strobes lighting the
darkness of the day.





THEN CONCENTRATE! COMMAND THEM TO FIRE AT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!






Over the
thunder of
panic, I
hear names
unfamiliar.

Hawkman.
Robin.

The Ray.

They sweep their
foes aside like
tenpins--

--while Wonder
Woman protects
the innocents.

A wide shot of Superman flying over a city. He is in a dynamic pose, with his arms outstretched and a determined expression. The city below is a dense urban landscape with many buildings and a large crowd of people on the streets.

With a final red glare, the fight is over.

Below, the bystanders buzz with gratitude.

The reporters...

...with questions.

REALLY THEM?

SEEN YOU IN YEARS.

YEARS? HELL, A LIFE-TIME.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL THIS

STORY OF THE CENTURY!

WAIT! WAIT!

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

QUICK! RADIO MIDTOWN AND LET 'EM KNOW...

"...THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE U.N. BUILDING!"



YOU
HEARD ME!
HOLD PAGE
ONE!

SECOND
COMING OF
SUPERMAN.

MAKING A
STATEMENT?

EVERYBODY
SHUDDUP, WILL YA?
WHEN THIS GUY
TALKS--



-- WE LISTEN!

GOOD
AFTER-
NOON.

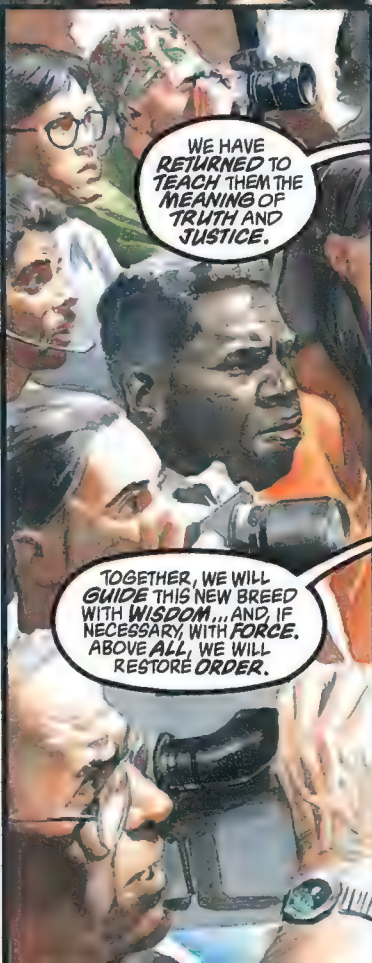
MANY OF YOU
MAY REMEMBER
US. WE HAVE BEEN
AWAY FOR A
WHILE.

THAT
WAS OUR
MISTAKE.

IN OUR ABSENCE, A NEW BREED
OF METAHUMANS HAS ARISEN... A
VAST PHALANX OF SELF-STYLED
"HEROES" UNWILLING TO PRESERVE
LIFE OR DEFEND THE DEFENSE-
LESS!!!

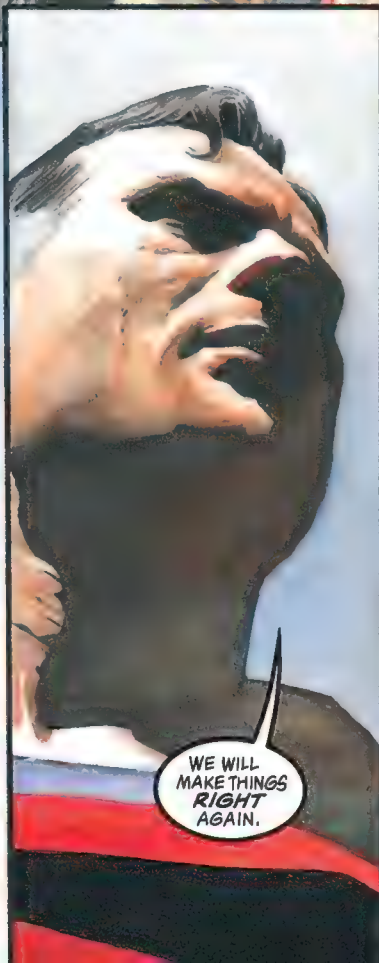


...A LEGION OF
VIGILANTES WHO HAVE
PERVERTED THEIR GREAT
POWERS... WHO HAVE
FORSWORN THE RE-
SPONSIBILITIES DUE
THEM.

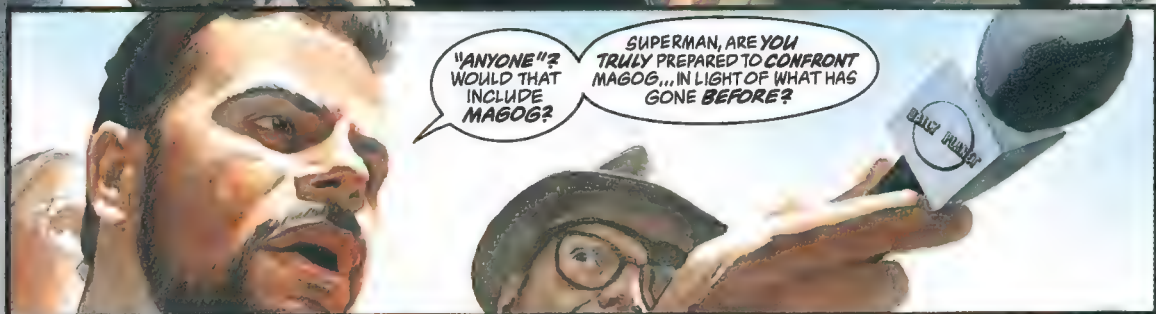


WE HAVE
RETURNED TO
TEACH THEM THE
MEANING OF
TRUTH AND
JUSTICE.

TOGETHER, WE WILL
GUIDE THIS NEW BREED
WITH WISDOM... AND, IF
NECESSARY, WITH FORCE.
ABOVE ALL, WE WILL
RESTORE ORDER.



WE WILL
MAKE THINGS
RIGHT
AGAIN.





THERE'S A
FEAR IN THE
ROOM.

NO. A
VALIDATION
OF FEAR.



LONG HAVE THESE
MORTALS SUSPECTED
THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER
THE CAPTAINS OF HU-
MANITY'S DESTINY.

THEIR
SUSPICIONS
HAVE JUST BEEN
CONFIRMED.



YOU SAID YOU'RE HERE TO JUDGE
A COMING EVIL. SUPERMAN IS SOME-
HOW ENTWINED IN THIS SIN, BUT WHAT
EXACTLY IS IT?

THE ANSWER TO
THAT QUESTION REMAINS
LOCKED IN YOUR PROPHETIC
DREAMS, MCCAY.

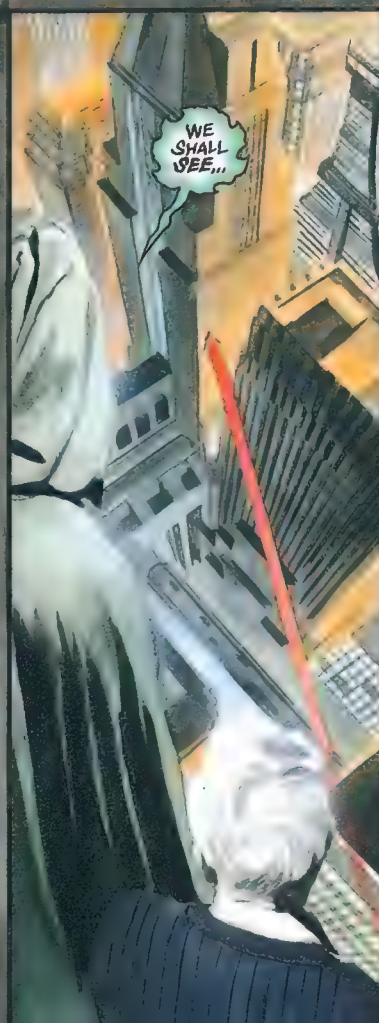
WHAT DO
YOU SEE? WHAT
DO YOU HEAR?



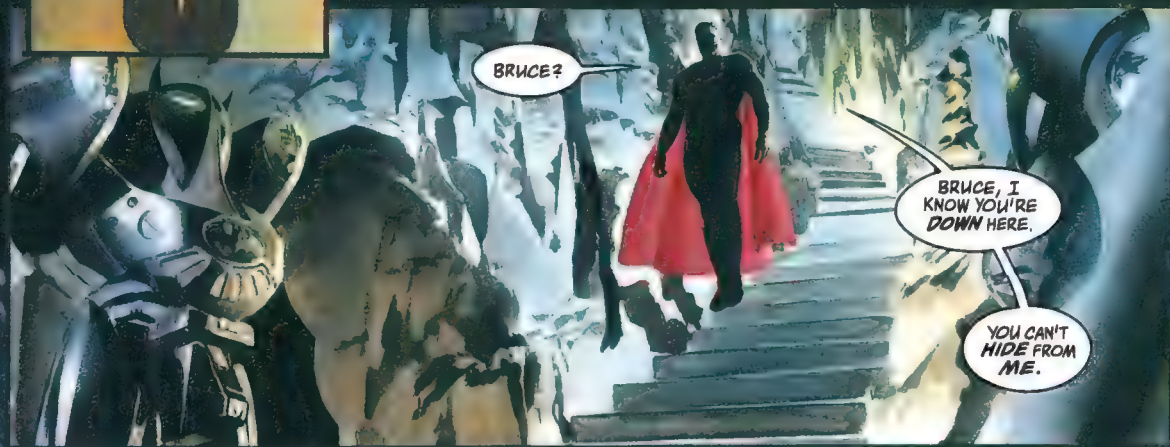
A...A JUMBLE
OF IMAGES. A
CACOPHONY OF
APOCALYPTIC
VERSE.

IT STILL
MAKES SO LITTLE
SENSE...

SUPERMAN
SAID HIS LEAGUE
WILL GROW. WHO
ELSE WILL HE CALL
TO HIS SIDE?



WE
SHALL
SEE...



BRUCE?

BRUCE, I
KNOW YOU'RE
DOWN HERE.

YOU CAN'T
HIDE FROM
ME.



I
BOW TO YOUR
SUPERIOR
WISDOM.



AFTER
ALL...

...YOU KNOW
ALL ABOUT
HIDING...

DON'T YOU,
CLARK?



DON'T
CALL ME
CLARK.

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THE MANOR
?

ONCE MY
IDENTITY GOT EXPOSED?
BANE AND TWO-FACE
HAPPENED TO IT. DOESN'T
MATTER. I HAVE EVERY-
THING I NEED DOWN
HERE.

BESIDES, IT'S
NOT AS IF ANYONE
INTRUDES ON ME.
THAT HARDLY EVER
HAPPENS...

...CLARK.



THAT'S RIGHT.
SOMEONE TOLD ME
YOUR NIGHTS BECAME
FREE ONCE GENOSYDE
BLEW UP ARKHAM
ASYLUM AND
EVERYONE IN IT.

NOT TO MENTION
BELLE REVE PRISON
AND BLACKGATE.
NOT AN ACTION I'D
CONDONE...

...BUT TELL ME THE
THOUGHT OF IT DOESN'T
GIVE YOUR INVULNERABLE
SKIN A LITTLE TINGLE.



I DON'T
HAVE THAT DARK
A SIDE.

TELL THAT TO
YOUR TAILOR.

BLACK
IS A NEW LOOK
FOR YOU.



BRUCE...THE LEAGUE NEEDS YOU.

I'M BUSY.

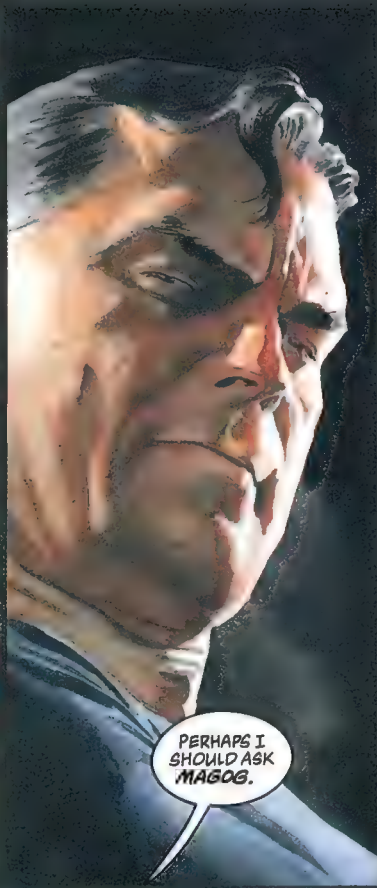
TWENTY-FIVE AND THIRTY-TWO... RESUME PATROL.



TOO BUSY TO HELP SAVE THE WORLD?

THE CRISIS AT HAND ISN'T NEW, CLARK. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

OH, I'M SORRY.



PERHAPS I SHOULD ASK MAGOG.



FRICTIONS HAVE BEEN BUILDING TO A HEAD FOR YEARS, CLARK.

THE METAHUMAN POPULATION BOOMED WHILE YOU WERE GONE... ONCE ORDINARY FOLKS DECIDED YOU AND I WERE TOO GENTLE AND OLD-FASHIONED TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

THEY WANTED THEIR "HEROES" STRONGER AND MORE RUTHLESS.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.

MANEUVER TWELVE.



RIGHT NOW, THE METAHUMANS HAVE THE KEYS TO EARTH'S KINGDOM. WRESTING CONTROL IS A DELICATE MATTER.

IT REQUIRES FINESSE... AND METICULOUS, CAREFUL PLANNING AGAINST THOSE ENEMIES MORE HIDDEN... BUT IT CAN BE DONE.

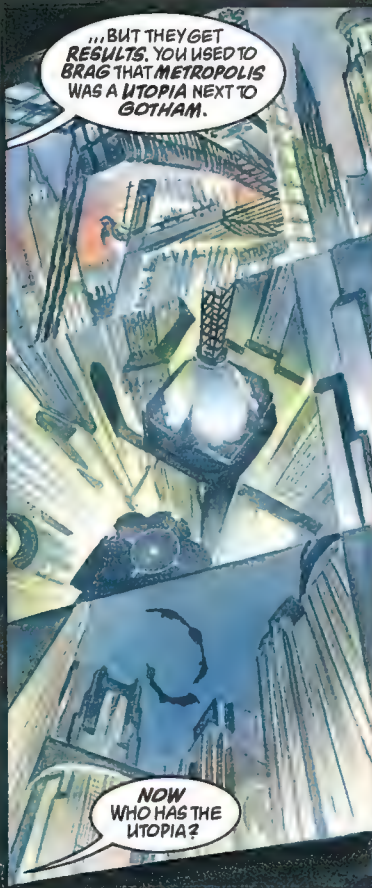
WITHOUT, I MIGHT ADD, SUPERMAN AND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE BOOMING INTO TOWN-- PUNCHING NOW, ASKING QUESTIONS LATER.



DICK DOESN'T SEE IT THAT WAY.

YOU GOT HIM TO RECLAIM THE ROBIN MANTLE. IS THAT SUPPOSED TO SWAY ME? TRY HARDER. HE AND I NEVER DID SEE COMPLETELY EYE TO EYE.

I HAVE MY OWN CONTROLS IN PLACE, THANK YOU. THEY MAY BE SLOWER AND MORE METHODICAL THAN YOURS...



...BUT THEY GET RESULTS. YOU USED TO BRAG THAT METROPOLIS WAS A UTOPIA NEXT TO GOTHAM.

NOW WHO HAS THE UTOPIA?



SOME PARADISE. FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, GOTHAM IS NEARLY A POLICE STATE. YOU ALWAYS FAVORED SCARING PEOPLE INTO OBEYING THE LAW, BUT THIS...

YOU'RE WILLING TO TURN ORDINARY CITIZENS INTO A SUPERSTITIOUS, COWARDLY LOT?

THEY'LL FEAR ME MORE THAN THEY'LL TRUST YOU. I DON'T TRUST YOU.

AFTER ALL, YOU LEFT. I STAYED.



WE'RE NOT LIMITED TO GOTHAM, CLARK. WE'VE BUILT A NETWORK THAT EXTENDS FROM HERE ALL THE WAY THROUGH STAR CITY.

"WE"?

I HAVE ALLIES. HUMAN ALLIES A LITTLE MORE IN TUNE THAN YOUR FRIENDS TO HUMANITY'S NEEDS.

WE DON'T WANT TO RULE THE WORLD. WE JUST WANT TO STRAIGHTEN IT OUT... OUR WAY... BY OURSELVES.



THEN YOU'RE SURE YOU WON'T JOIN ME?

FOR A MAN WHO CAN HEAR CLOUDS SCRAPE TOGETHER, YOU DON'T LISTEN VERY WELL.

THE ONLY THING I WONDER ABOUT YOUR DOWN AND DIRTY, QUICK AND FAST TOTALITARIAN "SOLUTIONS"...

...IS WHETHER I'D BE THE FIRST TO BE "REFORMED" BY YOUR NEW REGIME.

GOODBYE, CLARK.



HE *KNEW* WE WERE HERE. I COULD FEEL HIS X-RAYS. HELL, I'M PROBABLY STERILE NOW.

~sigh~

LET IT GO, LOVE



WHO...?

OLIVER QUEEN, DINAH LANCE, TED KORD, *URBAN* WARRIORS...

ACTUALLY, OLLIE, GIVEN THE LOW LEVEL OF ROENTGENS INVOLVED, I'D CALCULATE NOTHING INTRINSICALLY HARMFUL ABOUT--

~zzzzzz~

STOP MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR SCIENCE, BEETLE. LET AN OLD MAN BE PARANOID.

COURSE, IF THEY'RE REALLY AFTER YA, IT AIN'T PARANOIA... IS IT, BATS?

IN TIME, THE LEAGUE WILL DO *SERIOUS* DAMAGE. IF THEY'RE ALLOWED INTO OUR ARENA, THE WORLD IS DOOMED.

SUPERMAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT HE'S REALLY UP AGAINST.

FORTUNATELY...



...WE HAVE OUR OWN TEAM TO CALL INTO PLAY.

YOU SOUND AS IF YOU HAVE A PLAN.

~pfft~

HOW SOON THEY FORGET.

DOES BATMAN EVER NOT HAVE A PLAN...?

WE'VE GOT CONTACTS ACROSS THE WORLD. IT'S TIME WE DREW THAT WEB TIGHT...



WERE THEY
EVER FRIENDS,
SUPERMAN AND
BATMAN?

THE WAY THEY
BICKER, IT'S HARD
TO TELL.

GREAT MINDS
DO NOT ALWAYS
THINK ALIKE.



IN THEIR DAY, THEY
WERE THE TRUEST REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR
KIND...

... ONE, THE ZENITH OF
HUMAN FORTITUDE AND
AMBITION...

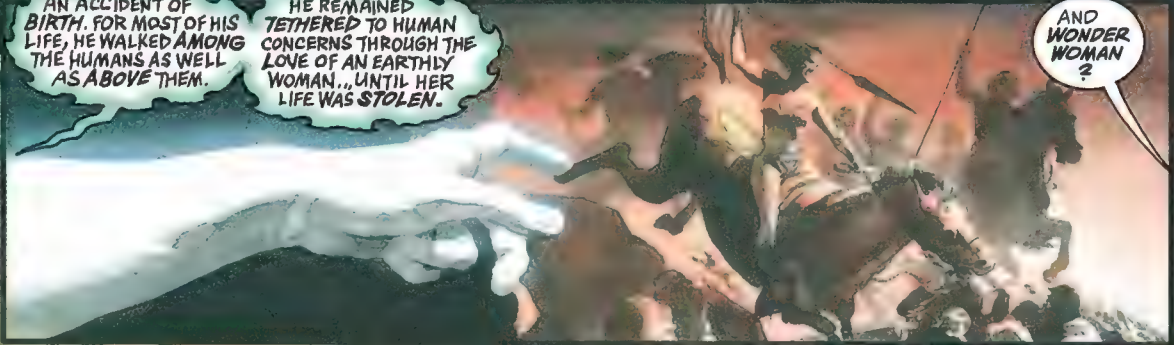
... THE OTHER, THE
PINNACLE OF OTHERWORLDLY
POWER.

OTHERWORLDLY...?

OF COURSE.
SUPERMAN IS AN
ALIEN.

AN ACCIDENT OF
BIRTH. FOR MOST OF HIS
LIFE, HE WALKED AMONG
THE HUMANS AS WELL
AS ABOVE THEM.

HE REMAINED
TETHERED TO HUMAN
CONCERNS THROUGH THE
LOVE OF AN EARTHLY
WOMAN... UNTIL HER
LIFE WAS STOLEN.



AND
WONDER
WOMAN
?



LIKE
SUPERMAN,
A PARADOX.

ETERNAL PRINCESS OF THE AMAZONS,
SHE IS BOTH AN AMBASSADOR OF PEACE AND
A MASTER OF WARFARE.

OF ALL
SUPERMAN'S
LIEUTENANTS
...

... IT IS SHE
WHO BEARS WATCHING
MOST CLOSELY.



And so, as hours fold into days,
we bear silent witness to Superman's
squad while they silence skirmish
after skirmish.

Whenever
possible,
Superman
negotiates
peace.



Whenever
impossible, he
enforces it...

...at every turn,
transforming
enemies...



...into allies.



All the while, a world hungry for hope gradually surrenders its fear to the skies.

With a cadence almost military, the League marches from shore to shore. Together, they act as an unstoppable unit, breaking rank...

...only occasionally.

Don't worry, ma'am! I'll handle this!

MY CAR!!!

DIANA...?

DIANA...
TAKE A
BREATH.

THEY'RE NOT
EVIL... THEY'RE JUST
MISGUIDED.

HOW BADLY? IF
THEY WANT TO ACT LIKE
WARRIORS... I'LL
SHOW THEM WAR.

YOU'RE RIGHT.
THEY SEEM TO HAVE
LEARNED LITTLE
REGARD FOR HUMAN
LIFE...

...AND THERE
IS NOTHING MORE
SACRED THAN
THAT.



I SAID
TWO
SUGARS.

YOU
HAM.

I feel *nauseated*...
and not for the
first time.

SORRY.
IMMORTAL HABITS
DIE HARD.

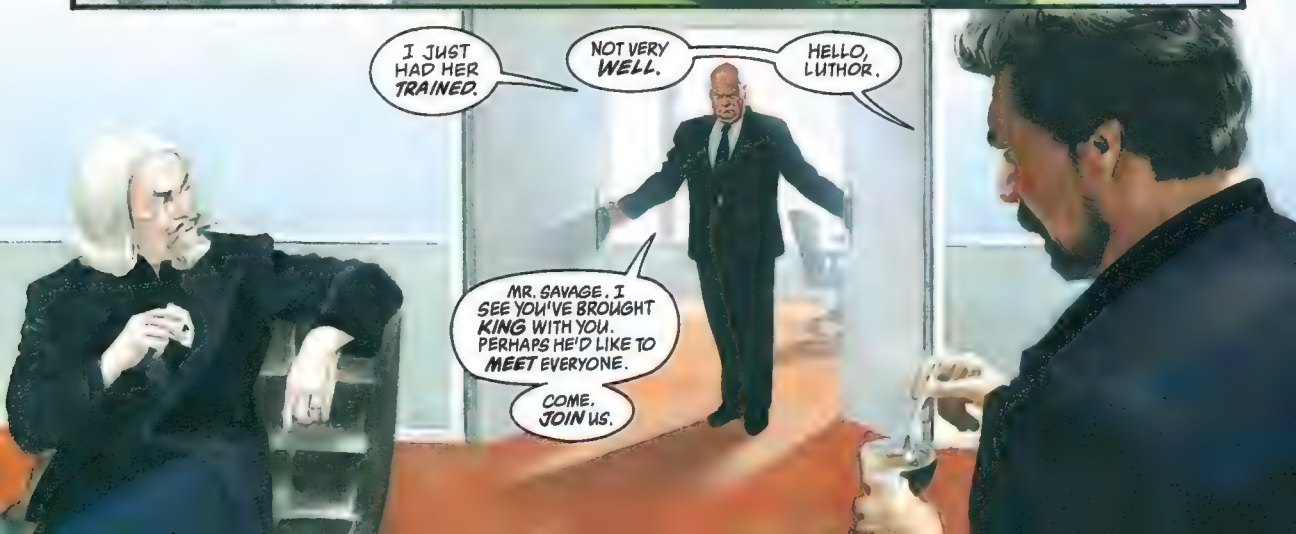
For every moment of
triumph we witness, we
are confronted with an
equal act of nihilistic
horror.



I do my best to stay as
impassive as my guide...and
yet, in this one murderous
moment...

...I swear I feel
him bristle...

> sigh <



I JUST
HAD HER
TRAINED.

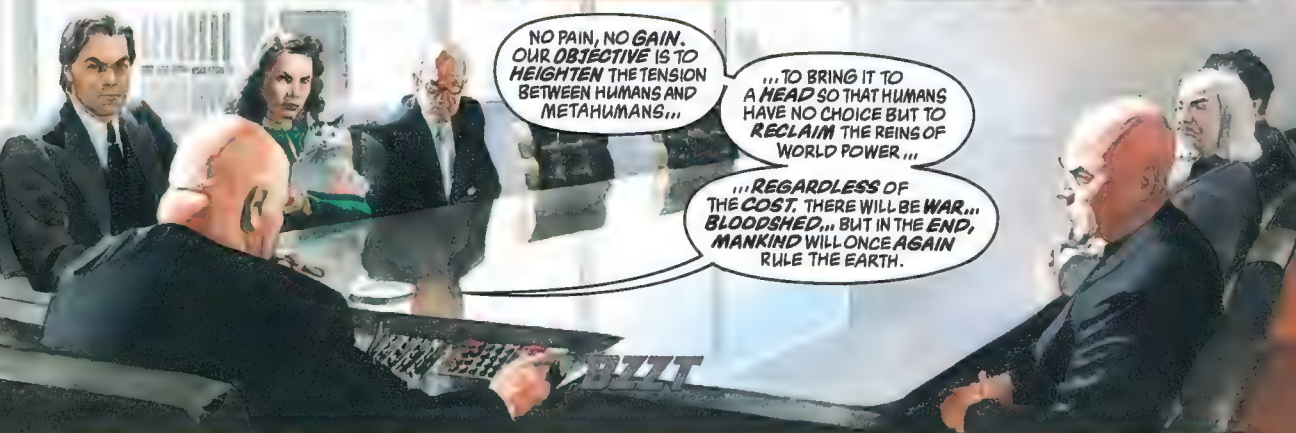
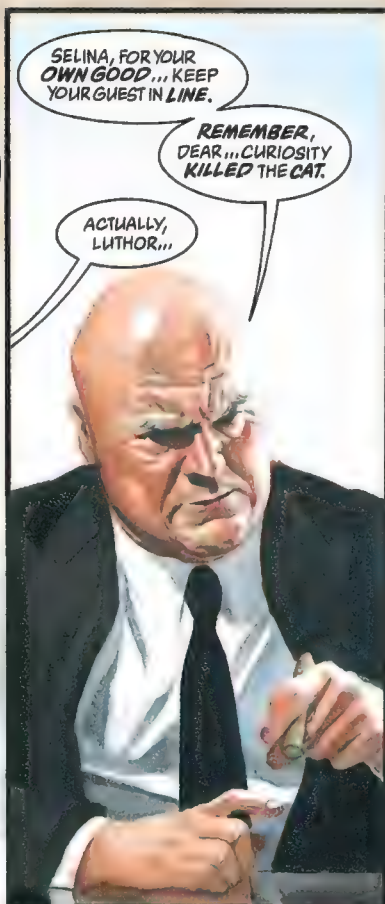
NOT VERY
WELL.

HELLO,
LUTHOR.

MR. SAVAGE. I
SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT
KING WITH YOU.
PERHAPS HE'D LIKE TO
MEET EVERYONE.

COME.
JOIN US.





WHICH BRINGS US TO OUR NEW PROBLEM.

THE RESURFACED JUSTICE LEAGUE... AND HOW THEIR UNTIMELY ARRIVAL HAS TURNED OUR TEN-YEAR AGENDA INTO A TEN-DAY STRATAGEM.

I NEVER DREAMED THEY'D RETURN. NOT IN A MILLION YEARS.

NEVERTHELESS, THE GODS HAVE STEPPED DOWN FROM OLYMPUS... AND, FRANKLY, I SEE SEVERAL WAYS TO TURN THEIR ARRIVAL TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

IN FACT, BY ENTERING INTO A CERTAIN ALLIANCE...

...I CAN GUARANTEE A CHANCE TO HASTEN THE CURRENT CRISIS TO ITS END... BY EXACERBATING IT.

AND IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE LEAGUE?

NOT EVEN FROM... SUPERMAN?

HE WILL NOT TOUCH ME! HE WILL NOT!

... HE ...

... HE CANNOT. IN FACT, I'VE GOT THE MOST... MARVELOUS ANTI-SUPERMAN PLAN.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOY?

ABSOLUTELY, MR. LUTHOR.

WHO--?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE LIGHTNING AND THE THUNDER.

COME. WE HAVE SPENT TOO MUCH TIME WALLOWING IN SIN.



"THERE ARE OTHER PLAYERS WHO DEMAND OUR ATTENTION."



THESE KIDS...THEY'RE MONSTERS...BEASTS!

THEY WILL BE TAMED.





OOOHH. I'M SHAKIN'!

AIN'T IT PAST YOUR BEDTIME, GRAMPA? WHAT DOES THE "S" STAND FOR? SENILE?

3HAW!C

WHATEVER YOU'RE SELLIN', I AIN'T--



WILL YOU SHUT UP?!



THANK YOU.

I'M HERE BECAUSE THE WORLD'S IN BAD SHAPE. WE HAVE A LOT TO DO AND NOT A LOT OF TIME TO DO IT IN.

I WANT YOU TO JOIN THE LEAGUE... WILLINGLY.



BEFORE YOU DO, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT WE HAVE RULES. HEROES ACT IN A CERTAIN WAY.

THIS ISN'T IT.



THOSE OF YOU WHO TAKE UP WITH US... WILLINGLY... WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE AS RESPONSIBLE AS YOU ARE POWERFUL. YOU'LL BE EXPECTED TO BEHAVE BETTER.

THOSE WHO DON'T... WILL BE DEALT WITH.





Time
shifts.

Armies
build.

And the voice of
Wesley Dodds
murmurs gently
to me.



"...and there was a rainbow
round about the throne, in
sight like unto an emerald."

A quote from
Revelation.
Another one.

Revelation.

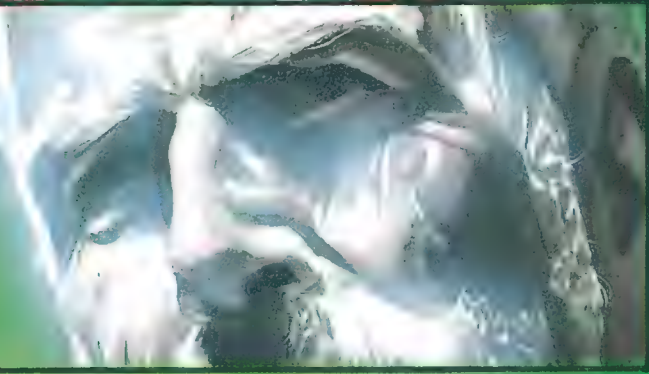
Armageddon.

Superman's troops
soon wield power
enough to shake
the earth.

Will they have
enough power
to save it?

And if so...

...from what?





America heals, but America is not the world. Stronger in number, the League begins to confront an archy on a global scale.

Most metahumans fall into line at the mere sight of the man from Krypton.

As on their home territory, Superman's army begins to meet with success more infrequently.



Many do not.

Clearly, each rebellion further frustrates him.

Social government was never Superman's arena. Is it possible that the constant pressures thrust upon him as an emerging world leader...

...could bend even a man of steel to the breaking point?



Meanwhile, those closest to Superman begin to whisper another question.

In all these missions, they ask... how is it they have yet to unearth Magog?

...if he's looking.

IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY.

WHAT?

With his super-senses, Superman should be able to find anyone...

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS HARD.

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, KAL.

WE DO WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.

AND YET, WE'RE ENDING UP WITH MORE CAPTIVES THAN CONVERTS.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THOSE WHO REFUSE TO SEE THE LIGHT?

I HAVE A SUGGESTION. FOLLOW ME...



QUITE
THE KINGDOM,
ARTHUR... AN
ARCHITECTURE
WORTHY OF
PARADISE
ISLAND.

EVERY BIT
AS BEAUTIFUL
AS ANY PLACE
ABOVE THE
SEA.

MORE.

THE TIDES OF
TIME HAVE BEEN
KIND TO YOU,
PRINCESS. YOU HAVE
NOT AGED A DAY
SINCE LAST WE
MET.

WOULD THAT THE
OUTSIDE WORLD HAD
FARED SO WELL, ARTHUR. BUT
TIMES ABOVE HAVE GROWN
HARD AND HARSH.

THE SEAS PROVIDE
THE PERFECT BUFFER BE-
TWEEN YOUR WORLD AND OURS.
BEARING THAT IN MIND, WE HAVE
COME TO ASK PERMISSION TO
CREATE HERE AN UNDERWATER
PENAL COLONY...

...FOR
REBELLIOUS
METAHUMANS.

WHAT?

DON'T INSULT ME
BY ACTING DISINGENUOUS,
SUPERMAN.

IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE
UNUSED TO BEING BURDENED
WITH THE SURFACE WORLD'S
REFUSE.

PERMISSION
DENIED.



ARTHUR, IF YOU COULD ONLY SEE THE TROUBLE WE'RE IN UP THERE...

JOIN US. STAND AT OUR SIDE AS YOU DID IN YOUR YOUTH.

A FAINT INVITATION. THOUGH I MISS THE CAMARADERIE, YOU KNOW I WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE BEING YOUR "AQUAMAN."

I HAVE LONG SINCE CEDED MY NAME AND ROLE TO MY PROTÉGÉ. I UNDERSTAND MANY OF OUR OLD FRIENDS HAVE FOLLOWED SUIT.



MY SUBJECTS NEED ME, PRINCESS.

YOU HAVE HUNDREDS OF CHAMPIONS TO DEFEND A FEW LAND MASSES. I PROTECT THE OTHER SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE WORLD... AND THERE IS ONLY ONE OF ME.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES YOU CANNOT EVEN DREAM OF.



YOW, PRINCESS, SURELY UNDERSTAND HOW UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN.

I... NO LONGER HAVE MY ROYAL STATION, ARTHUR.



NO!!!

YES. RECENTLY, MY AMAZON SISTERS DECREED THAT I HAD FAILED IN MY MISSION AS AN AMBASSADOR...

...THAT I HAD NOT MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

THEY STRIPPED ME OF MY ROYALTY AND OF MY HERITAGE.

I AM NO LONGER WELCOME ON PARADISE ISLAND.



I... AM SORRY. BUT THAT HAS NO BEARING ON MY DECISION.

THEN RESUME YOUR SOLITUDE, ARTHUR. RELISH YOUR WORLD...

...FOR SO LONG AS IT LASTS.

HOW LONG WERE YOU PLANNING ON KEEPING THAT FROM ME?

WHICH? THE PRISON...OR MY LOSS?

BOTH. DIANA, YOU HAVE CHANGED...AND I DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ME TO DO.

I'M NOT USED TO FORCING OTHERS TO FOLLOW MY LEAD. NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO JAIL THOSE WHO WON'T? TO ACT AS JUDGE AND JURY AGAINST OUR OWN KIND?

THAT'S A FASCISTIC LINE, DIANA.

THEN GET READY TO CROSS IT. WE ARE AT WAR, KAL... AND WE WILL TAKE PRISONERS. WE WILL HAVE TO.

THEY'RE NOT OUR KIND. WE'RE PROTECTORS OF HUMANITY. THEY ARE BARELY HUMAN.

IS THIS YOU TALKING, DIANA?

I SENSE SO MUCH ANGER IN YOU...

PASSION.

Umm... 'SCUSE US... BUT WE THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO KNOW.

NOT ANGER, KAL.

☞koff☞

KNOW WHAT?

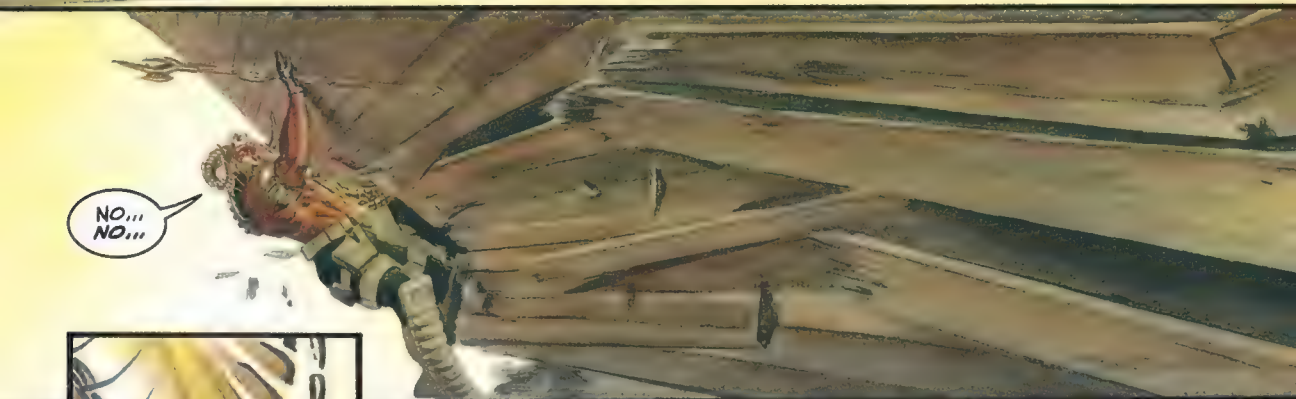
IT'S MAGOG, SUPERMAN.

WE'VE FOUND HIM...

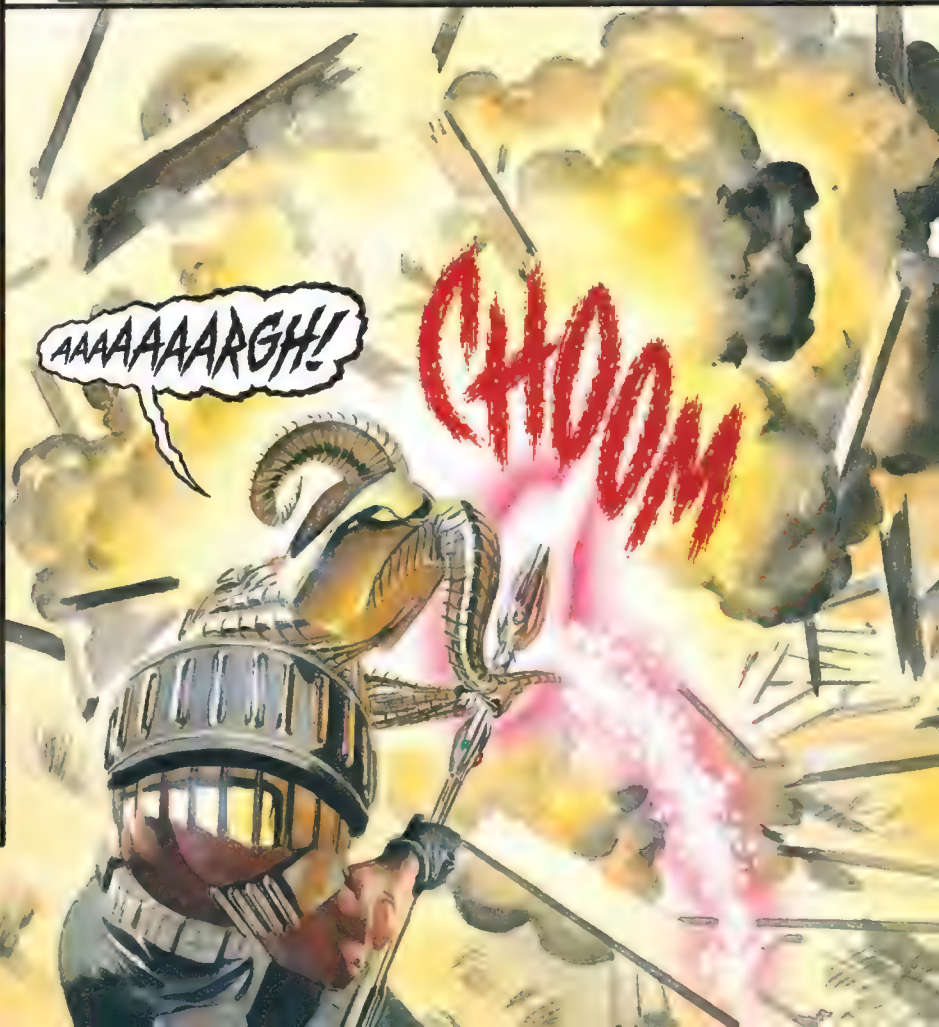


GENTLY...

...GENTLY...



NO...
NO...



AAAAAAARGH!

BOOM



WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK IN KANSAS, MAGOG?



WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO IT IS. THE METROPOLIS MILQUETOAST.

I NEVER LEFT, BLUE BOY.

I SAW THE NEWS FOOTAGE OF YOUR LAST MISSION... AND BELIEVE ME, IT WILL BE YOUR LAST.

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D GO THIS FAR OVER THE TOP.



YOU LED SIX UNSTABLE POWERHOUSES AGAINST ONE PATHETIC PARASITE-- AN OVERKILL GESTURE THAT MURDERED ONE

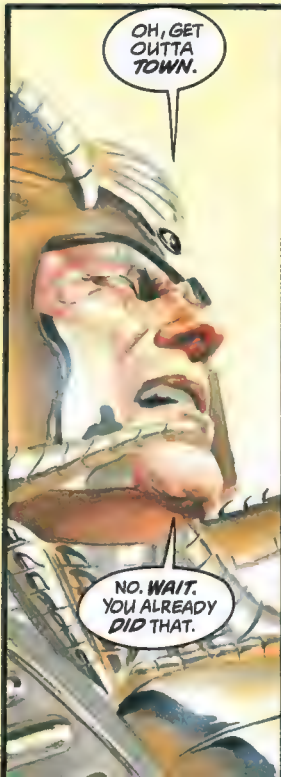
MILLION PEOPLE.

AND WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

GO AHEAD. TAKE A SWING. PUNISH ME, TRY TO LOOK ME AWAY... IF YOU'VE GOT THE GUTS.



I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, MAGOG.



OH, GET OUTTA TOWN.

NO. WAIT. YOU ALREADY DID THAT.



ACTUALLY, YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE BLAMING ME.

THIS WAS YOUR FAULT.



MY FAULT...?

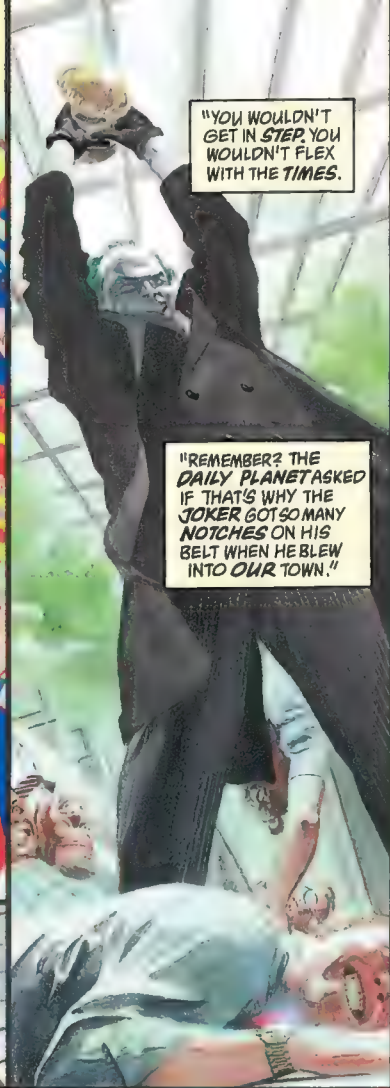


"THINK BACK. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LET HIMSELF GET STRUNG UP BY THE MAN ON THE STREET."

"VOX POPULI, MAN. OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW. BRIGHTER, FASTER, MEANER. NEXT YEAR'S MODEL. THAT'S WHAT THE HUNGRY CROWD ALWAYS WANTS."

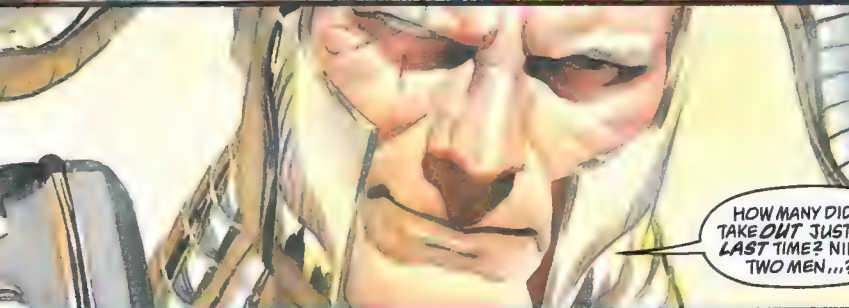
"HAD TO'VE BEEN EATING AT YOU FOR A WHILE BEFORE I EVEN CAME INTO TOWN. HELL, THEY WERE CALLING YOU OLD-FASHIONED WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER."

"WORLD'S OLDEST BOY SCOUT... BUT YOU WOULDN'T CHANGE."



"YOU WOULDN'T GET IN STEP. YOU WOULDN'T FLEX WITH THE TIMES."

"REMEMBER? THE DAILY PLANET ASKED IF THAT'S WHY THE JOKER GOT SO MANY NOTCHES ON HIS BELT WHEN HE BLEW INTO OUR TOWN."



HOW MANY DID HE TAKE OUT JUST THAT LAST TIME? NINETY-TWO MEN...?



AND ONE WOMAN.



"HELL. WE BOTH TORE UP THE CITY LOOKING FOR THAT BASTARD. I REALLY THOUGHT YOU OR BATMAN WOULD GET TO HIM FIRST."

"EVEN I ALMOST MISSED HIM."

"ALMOST."

"I WILL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WHEN YOU SAW ME STANDING OVER THAT SMOKING CREEP."

"ALL THE WAY TO JAIL, I THOUGHT, 'WHAT A SAP. WHAT AN OLD WOMAN. BLUE BOY'S DRAGGING ME IN FOR HAVING STONES HE DOESN'T."

"TIMES ARE TOUGH. JOKER'D BEEN DESERVING WORSE THAN 'CUFFS FOR YEARS. SO I TOOK IT ON MYSELF TO LAY HIM DOWN. I CAN'T BE JUDGED FOR THAT."

"AND I WAS RIGHT."

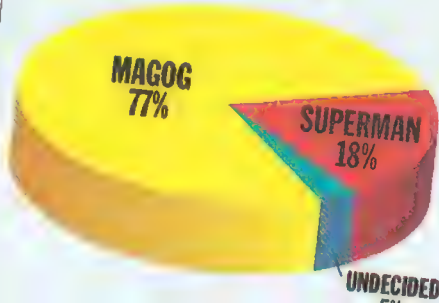
"I WAS A HERO."

Ronald Troupe
EXCLUSIVE TO THE PLANET

TRIPOLIS -- Following a week-long trial that polarized law-enforcement officials nationwide, the verdict in the Magog Case yesterday was a unanimous not-guilty verdict, acquitting Magog of any role in the death of the Joker. District Attorney Bill Henderson, a longtime associate and member of the Metropolis Police Department, announced the verdict as a "travesty of justice. Murder is murder," he said. Henderson's seems to be a case dampened by the cacophony of voices sent up by police officers and citizens. More than one city official has characterized Magog's actions as a "necessary evil

in these dangerous times." According to James Cambridge, head of the Metropolis Chamber of Commerce, "Superman's been around for a long time -- but how much better has he made this city?" The days of the Frankster and the Toyman are long past. Super-powered criminals routinely prey upon Metropolis, creating havoc and ruin with each footfall. If extreme measures save lives, then perhaps Superman should learn to adapt to the times. Perhaps his outdated methods and codes should be modernized while he still has a chance to defend Metropolis. "Failing that, perhaps he should consider leaving Metropolis in the hands of those who will better protect us."

METROPOLIS MARVEL?
Random Metropolitans tell us who best defends their future:



ABOVE: Superman, enraged by the verdict, faces contempt of court charges, after

"BUT YOU **JUST WOULDN'T** TROLL WITH IT, YOU HAD TO GET IN A **LAST SHOT** AND **PISS ME OFF.**"

"I WANTED THAT **TORCH** PASSED, I WANTED TO **CEMENT** MY CLAIM AS METROPOLIS'S **NEW NUMBER ONE.**"

"I ASKED FOR A **TITLE BOUT** BETWEEN YOU AND ME..."

"...AND I WON **BY DEFAULT...**"

"...WHEN YOU FLEW OFF WITH YOUR **CAPE** BETWEEN YOUR LEGS."

I NEVER GOT A **PIECE** OF YOU... AND NOW YOU'RE **RIGHT HERE.**

RIGHT WHERE I **WANT** YOU.

THE WAY YOU **TOOK OFF?** I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE **AFRAID** OF ME. A LOT OF PEOPLE **DID.**

BUT THAT WASN'T **IT.**

YOU WERE **AFRAID...** THAT I WAS THE **MAN OF TOMORROW.**

YOU WERE **AFRAID** OF THE **FUTURE** I REPRESENTED.



WELL,
LOOK AROUND
YOU.

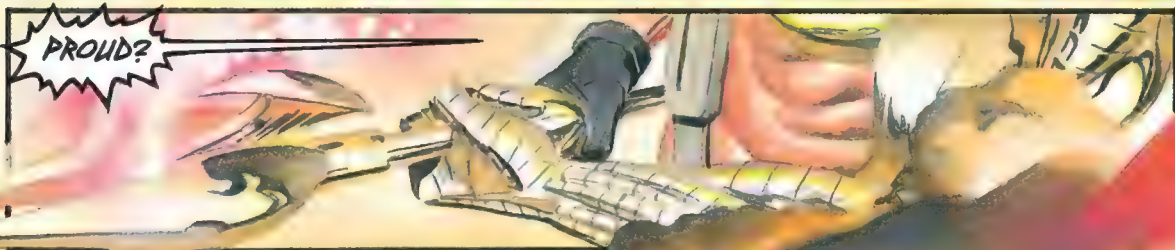
THIS
IS WHAT I
REPRESENT.



YOU
MUST BE
PROUD.

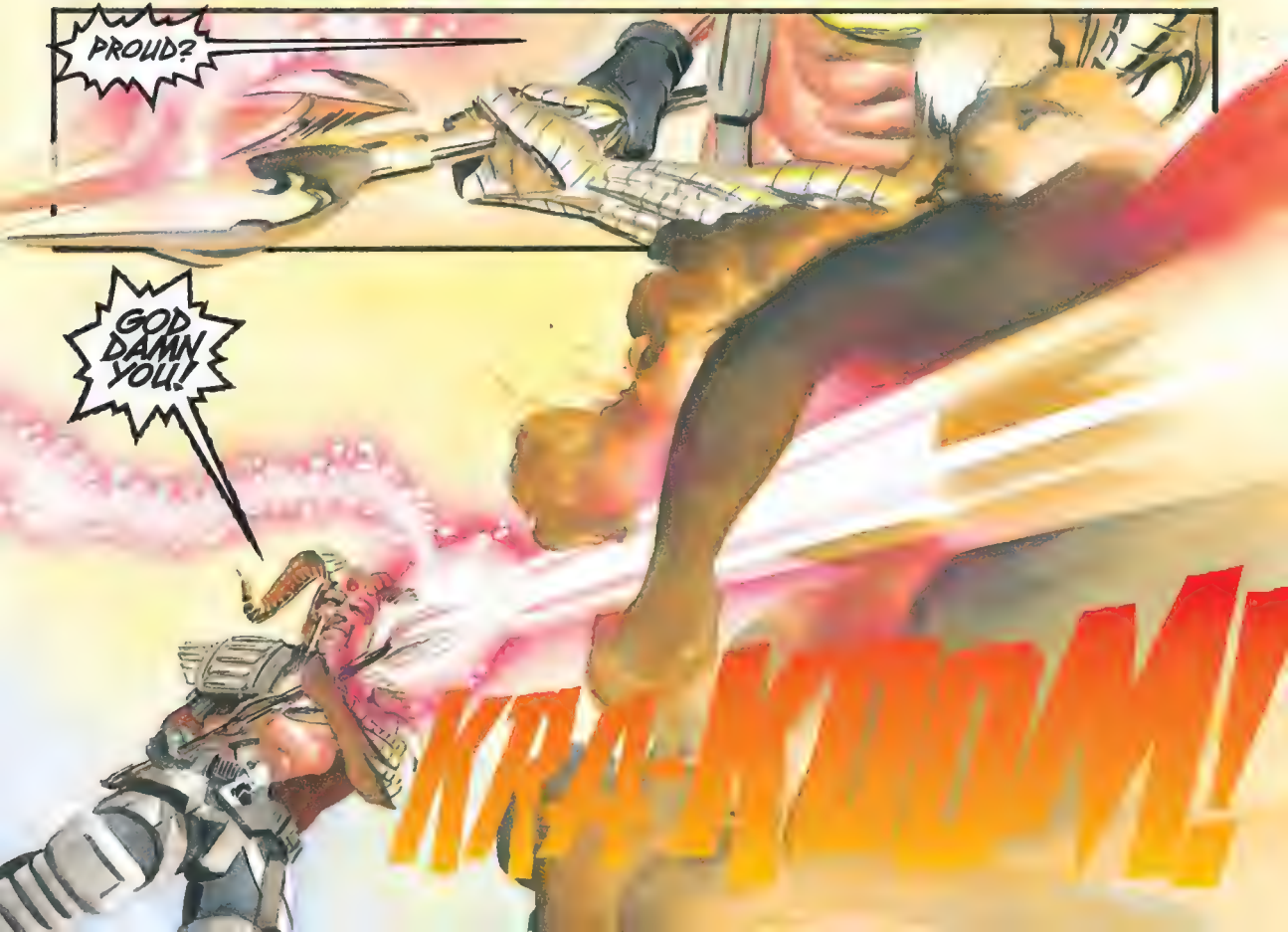


PROUD?

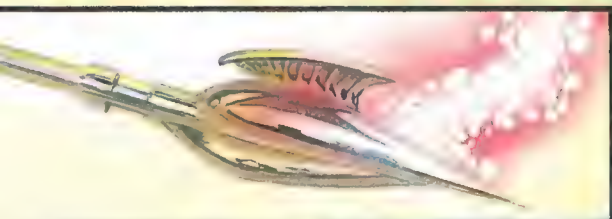


PROUD?

GOD
DAMN
YOU!



KRA-KUDW!

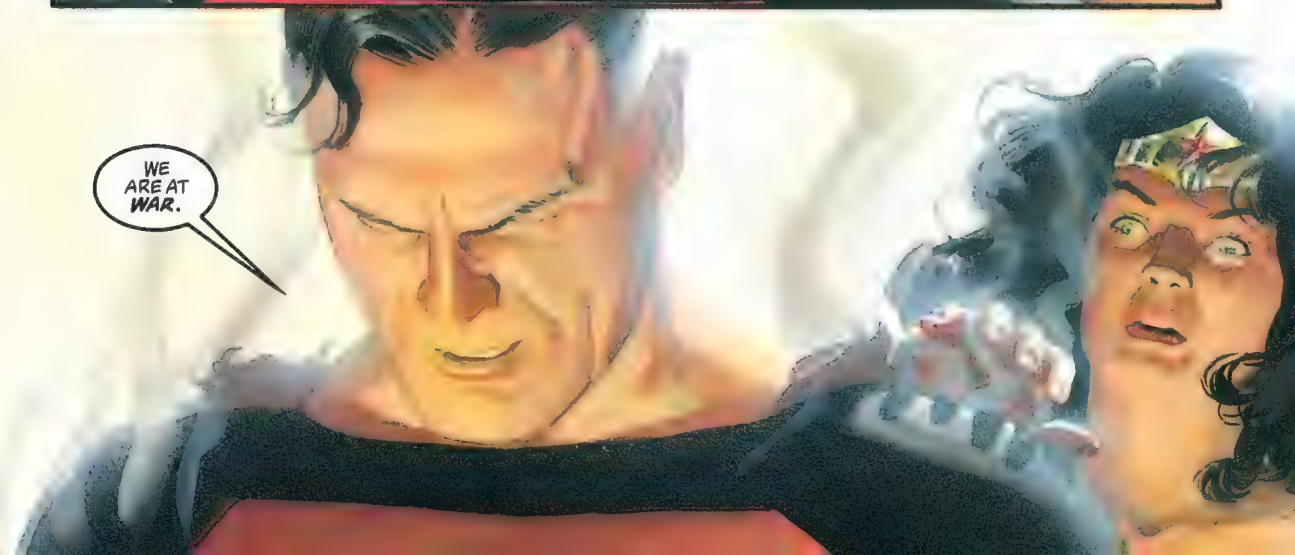


PROUD OF
BEING THE MAN OF
TOMORROW?



THEY CHOSE
THE MAN WHO
WOULD KILL
OVER THE
MAN WHO
WOULDN'T...

...AND
NOW THEY'RE
DEAD.






"WAR.

"AN ART THAT, WITH ONE
FINISHING STROKE, I
FINALLY **MASTERED**..."



"... BUT TO WHAT ULTIMATE **TRIUMPH**?

"APOKOLIPS IS STILL **HELPLESS**
WITH THOSE WHO CANNOT... **WILL**
NOT... **HELP THEMSELVES.**"



OFTEN HAVE I
CONSIDERED **UPROOTING**
THE MORE **ABERRANT**
LOWLIES... EXILING THEM
TO SOME **DISTANT**
ORB...



... BUT IT SEEMS
UNCONSCIONABLE
TO INFLECT SUCH **GRIEVOUS**
WOUNDS ON ANOTHER
PLANET.

I'M
SURE YOU
AGREE.



FAR BE IT FROM ME TO ARGUE WITH THE LORD OF APOKOLIPS.

I'M IMPRESSED AGE HAS CALMED YOUR LEGENDARY TEMPER. YOU SEEM FULLY IN CONTROL.



YOU'RE MORE LIKE DARKSEID THAN EVER, ORION.

SO IT WAS WRITTEN TO BE. OUR STORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GENERATIONAL ONE.

IT IS SAID THAT MANY MEN EVENTUALLY BECOME THEIR FATHERS.



I WOULDN'T KNOW.

I'D HEARD YOU'D FINALLY... **USURPED** DARKSEID'S THRONE. I WAS CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT YOU'D **ACCOMPLISHED** IN HIS STEAD.

NOT MUCH.

FRANKLY, ORION, OF ALL THE OLD ALLIES I HAVE **ENCOUNTERED**, YOU DISAPPOINT ME THE MOST.



YOU'RE A GOD. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO **CHANGE** YOUR WORLD.

OR TO DESTROY IT.




YOU WOULD BE **SURPRISED**, I FEAR, AT HOW EASILY **ONE** CAN LEAD TO THE **OTHER**.




I THOUGHT I *HAD* TRANSFORMED APOKOLIPS BY FINALLY *OVERTHROWING* DARKSEID'S DESPOTIC RULE.

IMAGINE THE *HORROR* OF LEARNING THAT, TO THE *LOWLIES* GROUND UNDER DARKSEID'S HEEL SINCE APOKOLIPS WAS *YOUNG*, *LIBERTY* WAS EVERY BIT AS PARALYZING AS *FASCISM*.




THEY RUSHED TO ELECT A *NEW* RULER. THEY CHOSE *ME*.

SUCH WAS MY *REWARD*.



SO BRING THEM TO MY REALM, SUPERMAN. BRING TO ME THOSE WHOSE PRESENCE ON *YOUR* WORLD YOU CONSIDER *TOO THREATENING*. THEY CAN NOT *POSSIBLY* BE MORE CHALLENGING TO ME THAN MY *OWN* SUBJECTS.

DEPORTATION WAS NEVER MY INTENT. I HAVE *NO DESIRE* TO SEE ANYONE REMOVED FROM THEIR *HOMEWORLD*.



GIVEN THE NATURE OF MY *OWN* STRUGGLE, I HAD HOPED THAT *ORION*, THE *DOG OF WAR*, COULD LEND SOME *WISDOM*... BUT I WAS *MISTAKEN*.

I CAN LEARN *NOTHING* FROM YOU.



THAT HARDLY MATTERS.

IF THIS IS ABOUT EMANCIPATING A WORLD FROM FEARS TYRANNICAL *SHACKLES*...

... IT ISN'T MY HELP YOU *NEED*...



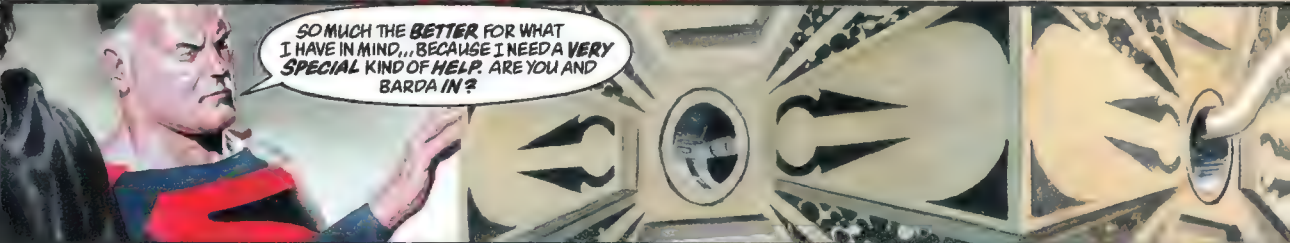
...NEVER ENOUGH TO FREE YOUR BODIES! YOU MUST FIRST UNLOCK YOUR MINDS!

WE WILL SHOW YOU THAT A SLAUGHTERHOUSE IS NOT A HOME! WHEN YOU REACH OUT AND TOUCH FREEDOM--

--YOU TOWER AS TALL AS ORION! HE FEARS YOU--FOR YOU CAN DREAM OF THINGS BEYOND HIM!

I SEE. A LESSON PLAN COMPLETE WITH VISUAL AIDS.

I ALWAYS SUSPECTED YOU TWO WOULD END UP AS TEACHERS.



SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR WHAT I HAVE IN MIND... BECAUSE I NEED A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF HELP. ARE YOU AND BARDIA IN?



KA-KLIK



DON'T SAY "IN." IT'S TOO CONFINING.

YOU'LL NEED A SECURITY FORCE IN THE FACILITY. I'LL PUT TOGETHER THE BEST--

BOOOM



THERE YOU ARE, SUPERMAN! I CAME TO RETRIEVE YOU FROM ORION'S LAIR, BUT YOU WERE GONE!

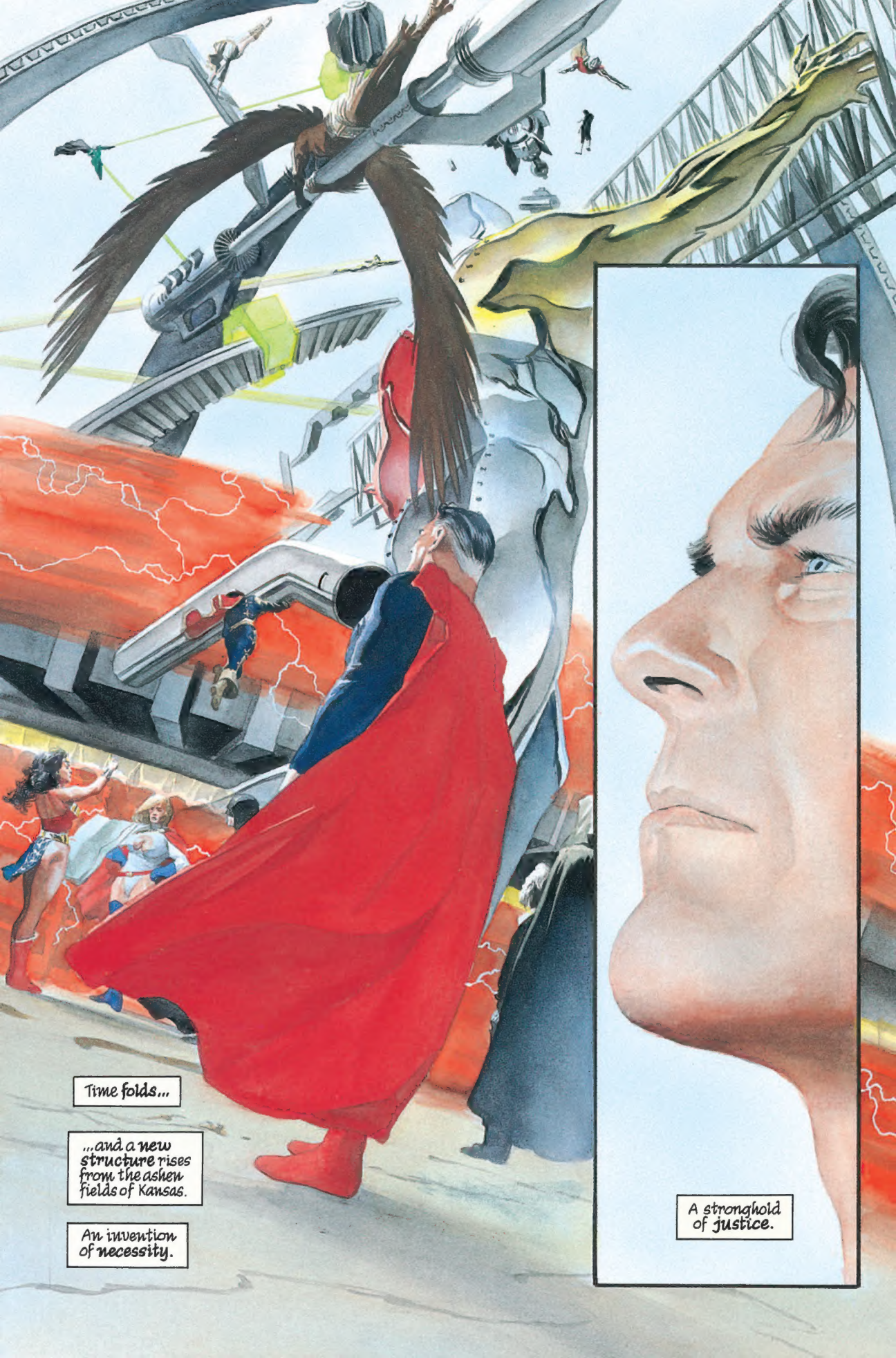
HURRY! I CANNOT KEEP THE BOOM THERE OPEN MUCH LONGER!

I SEE YOU'VE BEEN RECRUITING.

YOU WERE COUNTING ON US TO WORK ALONGSIDE AVIA?

I WAS TOLD THAT YOUR STORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN GENERATIONAL.

LET'S GO.



Time folds...

...and a new
structure rises
from the ashen
fields of Kansas.

An invention
of necessity.

A stronghold
of justice.



IT SEEMS **UNWISE** TO CONTAIN SO MUCH **POWER AND FURY** UNDER **ONE ROOF**, AND YET...

...WHAT OTHER CHOICE DOES SUPER-MAN HAVE?

IT IS A QUESTION HE WILL ASK HIMSELF A **HUNDRED TIMES** IN THE DAYS TO COME.

MEANWHILE, AN **UNGOPPLY FELLOWSHIP** HAS BEGUN TO MANIFEST...ONE THAT MAY **CHANGE ALL** THAT WE KNOW THUS FAR.



OBSERVE.

...CONGRATULATE OUR FRIEND **XH'FFASCH** FOR NEGOTIATING THE **ONE UNION** THAT MAY **YET** MAKE THE WORLD **SAFE...** FOR MANKIND.

FRIENDS, I PRESENT TO YOU OUR **NEWESTALLY** IN THE WAR AGAINST THE **GODS...**



...THE **BATMAN!**

THEY'VE BEGUN TO BUILD A **GULAG**. YOU KNOW THIS.

I KNOW THAT I DON'T WANT TO SPEND MY **REMAINING DAYS** THERE.



I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE YOU'RE **HERE**. IF I'D KNOWN THAT A COMMON ENEMY COULD BRING US **TOGETHER**, I WOULD HAVE **INVENTED ONE** YEARS AGO.

THIS MUST BE **KILLING** YOU.



GIVEN THE **CIRCUMSTANCES**, WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE BUT TO THROW IN WITH **LEX LUTHOR?**

ALONE, NEITHER YOU NOR I CAN EXPECT **VICTORY**. BUT **TOGETHER...**

...WE CAN **CURTAIL THE JUSTICE LEAGUE...** ONCE AND FOR ALL...



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The Hand